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# bulletin

## State and Federal News

### My Personal Passage



*Arts Commission Executive Director Shelley Cohn retires this October.*

As I sit here writing my last column for our newsletter, I can't help being a little nostalgic and sentimental.

I have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of

affection and thoughtful e-mails, notes and calls about my upcoming departure from the Arizona Commission on the Arts. I have had many tears and giggles in reflecting on the experiences I have been privileged to have over the past 30 years working with Arizona's growing and dynamic arts community.

When I arrived in January of 1976, a prominent Mesa legislator had introduced legislation to abolish the Arts Commission. She said that in times of economic distress the arts were a luxury. Advocacy was non-existent and few people knew of the work of the Arizona Commission on the Arts and Humanities (as it was called until 1982). Nevertheless, the outpouring of support from the general public as well as the arts community was remarkable. This experience contributed to the formation in 1980 of Arizonans for Cultural Development (now Arizona Citizens for the Arts) to be the statewide arts advocacy organization.

The advocacy network has been tested regularly over the years. It has continued to rise to the occasion to assure that legislators in

every legislative district know of the work of the agency and the meaning the arts provide in people's lives in Arizona communities. The agency continues to deliver this value with a very modest investment of state funds.

The evolving partnership of the Arizona Commission on the Arts with the statewide advocacy organization has been a model for states around the country and must continue into the future with the ongoing engagement of the broadest range of individual artists, arts and community organizations, schools, and patrons.

My first task at the Commission was running the mimeograph machine. Copies made with purple ink were duplicated and sent out to communicate our message. My philosophy was if you can't do it quickly, it is not worth doing. So, we had a lot of crooked type and smeared purple ink for a while, before I mastered the technology.

I remember when everything in the agency stopped when it was time to send out our monthly newsletter. Staff members affixed address labels by hand and put thousands of newsletters in zip code order each month. It was a bonding experience. We all cheered when this task went to a mailing house. In the 1980s we had one computer for our grants officer. We had one computer for e-mail where we printed messages and passed them out to each staff member. And now we celebrate EGOR, our online grants system, and the capacity to use and analyze the wealth of information that grantees send to us each year. We assure you that no longer will that data only be used for reports and filed in cabinets rarely to be seen or used again.

But it was the interaction with the artists and arts organizations that made a tremendous impact on me. My first project was working with Richard Shelton on *Do Not Go Gentle*, a publication of writing by inmates at the Florence Prison. Dick continues to lead the longest continuously running prison writers' workshop in the country.

In my time here, hundreds of artists have worked in schools, sharing their artforms with students and teachers. Some of these people have become among Arizona's most recognized artists.

The artists in all disciplines who have received our prestigious fellowships and artist projects grants write to tell us that this recognition is what has kept them motivated to continue their work as artists.

The growth of the range of arts organizations has been phenomenal. In 1979, the Arizona Commission on the Arts received a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the first statewide consortium to receive this prestigious funding. It signaled a change in the maturity of the arts. The Phoenix Art Museum had a budget of just over \$300,000 and no organized fundraising system. This grant required that the seven participating organizations raise \$3 for each federal dollar. They surpassed expectations by raising seven new dollars for each federal dollar. From there came the emergence of successful bond elections to support new building and facilities; National Arts Stabilization (thanks to the Flinn Foundation) for large and mid-size organizations; the Arizona Arts Trust Fund; and, the statewide arts endowment, Arizona ArtShare.

We started the SOS (small organization support program; now, GOS or general operating support) to help support staffing of arts organizations. Small organizations had received funding in the late 1970s from the U.S. Office of Labor CETA program to hire their first staff. When this federal funding disappeared, we did not want the art groups to have to return to all volunteer. The general operating support programs have grown to support over 130 organizations each year. The funds are combined with technical assistance and training to ensure the financial support is used wisely. These funds help establish the solid foundation that is necessary for organizations to do their creative work and to have the capacity to reach new audiences and generate additional dollars.

Those early initiatives have led us to where we are today: we take advantage of opportunities before us and we have created new ways to support the arts in as

meaningful ways as the state system has allowed, to assure that the broadest range of people in the state have opportunities to engage in the arts as they choose. We are proud that we are known for the knowledge and information that our staff members provide to new and established artists and organizations in addition to the funds that are given.

This career has been a thrilling adventure. I leave with great, great memories and a sense of accomplishment. I am proud of the staff people and board members who have been involved with me over the past decades. I feel a sense of accomplishment with the release of our new strategic plan and website. I know that the board and staff are prepared to carry on the renewed mission of the agency long into the future.

Although I won't be ordering new ACA cards, you may always reach me at my personal e-mail: [shelley.cohn@cox.net](mailto:shelley.cohn@cox.net)

### Emerging Leaders AZ

If you are a professional in the arts and culture sector who is either 35 years of age or younger or someone new to the arts and culture sector, Emerging Leaders AZ (ELAZ) wants to hear from you. Emerging Leaders AZ welcomes all individuals who feel they are up-and-coming in the arts and culture field. Initiated by a collaboration from Americans for the Arts, Arizona Commission on the Arts, and Arizona Citizens for the Arts, ELAZ exists for the purposes of networking, professional development, creating community, and advocacy. In the near future, ELAZ will be sending out a survey that will help direct its agenda for the year. Your input is vital. In the meantime, please come join the discussion on the listserv at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EmergingLeadersAZ>. Or for more information on opportunities for emerging leaders in Arizona, please email [EmergingLeaders@qwest.net](mailto:EmergingLeaders@qwest.net).

## PASSAGES

### Southwest Arts Conference 2006

Friday, January 27, 2006  
8:00AM-4:30PM  
Glendale Civic Center

This year's theme, **Passages**, has special significance. In the sense of a *span of time*, this term reflects how long the Commission has been serving the state's arts scene, partnering with you: artists, schools, and arts and community organizations. You have also marked time by helping to address the good and difficult changes within your communities, giving voice to events as *rites of passage*. You also serve as *conduits* for communities and people to experience art. But, perhaps most importantly, **passage** also connotes *movement* or *allowing for movement*, the most intangible but exciting element you contribute through your efforts and works.

For details as they develop, check our conference webpage at [www.ArizonaArts.org/SWAC](http://www.ArizonaArts.org/SWAC).

### The Commission to Have New Web Look

The Commission has been spending the summer months working on redesigning its website. We have restructured the architecture of the site to be more user-friendly and intuitive. One of the changes is to separate out the information and resources for individual artists, schools, and organizations (which include municipalities). The site also will bring our "look" into conformity with other state websites, which includes a new URL: **[www.azarts.gov](http://www.azarts.gov)**. The change over to the new site is set for mid October. Anyone going to our old web address will be redirected to the new one.

### New Commission Email Addresses

Along with getting a new URL, the Commission staff email addresses will be changing to align with the state system. The suffix for the new email will simply follow the example of our web address: for example, [info@azarts.gov](mailto:info@azarts.gov). This change will not go into effect until mid October, so please don't change your list serv or address book yet.

To find out the exact date that our email address and website change, please visit our website (the soon-to-be-old-one: [www.ArizonaArts.org](http://www.ArizonaArts.org)).

## American Masterpieces Grants

We are pleased to give you an update on the status of the National Endowment for the Arts initiative, *American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius*, to acquaint Americans with the best of their cultural and artistic legacy. On its own and in partnership with state arts agencies, the NEA is rolling out this program that received additional funds from the most recent congressional appropriations process.

Guidelines for direct grants to arts organizations will be forthcoming in September with deadlines in early November. Because of the very quick turnaround time, the staff of the Arizona Commission on the Arts wants to offer any assistance we can provide in brainstorming on project ideas or convening appropriate partners.

The focus of this year's applications will be in four areas: **choral music**, **dance**, **musical theater**, and **visual arts**.

**Choral Music:** Support for up to six regional choral festivals with grants of \$25,000 to \$50,000. **Dance:** Grants of \$10,000 to \$100,000 for dance companies and presenters to restage and perform work that is artistically, historically, and culturally significant; grants of \$10,000 to \$15,000 for colleges and universities to restage, perform, and document significant choreography and provide dance students with access to rich but often inaccessible legacy of American dance history. **Musical Theater:** Up to ten grants of \$25,000 to \$75,000 to support home-based or touring performances of masterworks; one tour of a masterwork to three to five college and university presenters. **Visual Arts:** Up to ten proposals for \$30,000 to \$200,000 will be selected to tour exhibitions that can be shown in two to five venues across the country.

Funds will come directly to the Arizona Commission on the Arts to support the *American Masters* program. Our agency will begin planning the most appropriate strategies to support these initiatives after receiving clearer direction and confirmation of the amount of funds available.

## Two Major Arts and Accessibility Conferences

Agendas have been set for two major conferences to be held in Arizona this fall. These promise to be remarkable opportunities to help make arts experiences accessible to everyone and to build participation in the arts.

### LEAD/Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability Training and Conference

September 29-October 1, 2005

Mesa Arts Center and the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts

*For representatives of arts and cultural organizations there will be pre-conference workshop intensives September 28, 1:00-5:00 p.m.*

You and your staff and volunteers should have the information and judgment to make smart, informed decisions about serving patrons and volunteers with disabilities. LEAD is designed not only for accessibility managers of theaters, concert halls, colleges/universities, museums, presenting organizations and touring companies, but also has sessions designed especially for marketing staff, box office and house management, outreach/education directors and visitor services coordinators, including "Accessibility for Under \$100," "Making Outdoor Events and Exhibits Accessible," and preconference intensives for marketing directors, box office managers and accessibility "rookies."

Registration is just \$125 for nonprofits and colleges/universities; with two or more team members the registration fees drop to just \$95 per person. Preconference registration packages and one-day discount passes are also available. For full information and a registration form, visit [www.kennedy-center.org/accessibility/KC\\_LeadConf\\_05.pdf](http://www.kennedy-center.org/accessibility/KC_LeadConf_05.pdf), or call 202/416-8727.

Arts organizations in Arizona may request travel stipends to assist with attendance. For details, visit [www.ArizonaArts.org/online\\_tools/accessibility/index.htm](http://www.ArizonaArts.org/online_tools/accessibility/index.htm).

**LEAD is sponsored by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.**

### Building Your Career

October 1-2, 2005

Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts

This forum is for Arizona artists with disabilities, and those who work to develop creative career opportunities for Arizonans (arts managers, presenters, publishers, and exhibitors in both the commercial and non-profit sectors), and service and government organizations who work with artists, people with disabilities, or jobseekers. *Building Your Career* is a professional development, networking and solution-building conference, focusing on those artists and managers who are on a career path, and are committed to their professional development.

Conference highlights include Keynote speaker John Killacky, Program Director for Arts and Culture at The San Francisco Foundation, a nationally-recognized leader in the field of arts presenting, and an artist with a disability; interactive presentations and discussion with local, regional and national artists and artworkers, including the *Creative Industries Study*; development of personal career action plans; dialogue about marketing your work as an artist; networking regarding career development; and creation of a statewide conversation about the needs of those who engage/present artists, and their obstacles to engaging/presenting artists with disabilities. Space is limited, so please submit an application as soon as possible. For full Forum and application information, visit [www.ArizonaArts.org/buildingyourcareerforum](http://www.ArizonaArts.org/buildingyourcareerforum); or call 602/229-8220 or 602/229-8232.

*Building Your Career* is presented by the Arizona Commission on the Arts and VSA arts of Arizona. This Forum is sponsored by The National Endowment for the Arts, VSA arts, and the National Arts and Disability Center at the University of California, Los Angeles.

## Staff News

In August, the Commission said goodbye to three staff members: Meriam Diel, Accounting Technician, who retired after 10 years at the Commission; Colette Pecenka, Arts Program Assistant, who has moved on to the Mesa Arts Center as their Membership Coordinator; and Patrick Demers, Schools and Locals Director, who is in his first year in the M.F.A. Directing Program at Arizona State University. We thank them all for their contributions, and wish them well.



*Pictured (left to right): Mitch Menchaca, Mandy Buscas, and Christopher Burawa*

Mandy Buscas, After School Coordinator/Arts Learning Assistant, moved into the role of Arts Learning Programs Director, and Mitch Menchaca took on local arts councils/commissions, and is now the Locals Development and Expansion Arts Director. The Commission welcomes Christopher Burawa as the Commission's new Literature Program Director and Public Information Officer. He joins ACA after the departure of Paul Morris, who is now the Director of the Master of Liberal Studies Program at Arizona State University.

**For a complete listing of artist opportunities, jobs and information and referral, visit our website: [www.ArizonaArts.org](http://www.ArizonaArts.org)**

### Arizona Commission on the Arts *the state arts agency*

Through public support of the arts, the Commission works on behalf of the people of Arizona linking the arts and communities. The Arizona Commission on the Arts provides services and funding to help make the connection between artists and communities vital and of lasting value.

#### Editor

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This document is available in an alternate format by contacting the Arts Commission at 602/255-5882.

Announcements about non-Commission-sponsored activities and opportunities are provided as a service. Questions about accessibility or alternative format should be directed to the designated contact.



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### RETURN SERVICE REQUEST

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